

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST
for Draft Revised NAP Public Access Policy
— Washington State Department of Natural Resources —

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: **Natural Area Preserve (NAP) Public Access Policy, revisions and re-adoption (This is a non-project proposal; see Supplement D, attached).**
2. Name of applicant: **Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Natural Areas Program**
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person: **Curt Pavola, Natural Areas Program Manager, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, PO Box 47014, Olympia, WA 98504-7014; 360.902.1032**
4. Date checklist prepared: **February 15, 2005**
5. Agency requesting checklist: **Washington State Department of Natural Resources**
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): **This policy is expected to be reviewed and adopted by Department of Natural Resources executive management in March or April 2005.**
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain. **The management of natural area preserves is an ongoing program at the Department of Natural Resources. Implementation of the policy will affect existing and future program activities. The proposed policy does not represent a fundamental change in program direction, since conservation remains the core focus of management activities.**
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal. **None**
9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain. **No**
10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known. **None**
11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agency may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.) **This non-project proposal is a policy revision that implements legislative intent in Chapter 79.70 of the Revised Code of Washington, as amended during the 2002 Legislative Session. While the revised language allows for a low level of public access outside of sensitive areas within natural area preserves, all such uses would be pre-approved by the department and would be non-degrading to the environment and in keeping with the conservation needs of the site. No appreciable detrimental impact is anticipated due to the revised policy. The policy applies to all 49 natural area preserves managed by the Department of Natural Resources, however not all preserves have non-sensitive "buffer" areas that would be considered for additional public access. The actual number of preserves, and the actual activities that may be proposed at each, is unknown at this time. This draft public access policy will allow analysis and pre-approval of proposed uses. Management plans and various management prescriptions are reviewed by a statewide citizen advisory body, the Natural Heritage Advisory Council.**
12. Location of proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographical map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency,

you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any applications related to this checklist. **This statewide policy applies to all natural area preserves managed by the Department of Natural Resources.**

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

- a. General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountains, other _____. **The proposal includes 49 existing natural area preserves throughout the state with highly variable features. This non-project proposal does not include activities that would impact slopes or soils.**
- b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)? **Does Not Apply**
- c. What general types of soils (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland. **Does Not Apply**
- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe. **Does Not Apply**
- e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill. **Does Not Apply**
- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe. **Does Not Apply**
- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)? **Does Not Apply**
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any: **Does Not Apply**

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from this proposal (i.e. dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known. **None**
- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe. **No**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any: **Does Not Apply**

3. Water

a. Surface:

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into. **Many of the 49 existing natural area preserves have surface water within or adjacent to their boundaries, including lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, and estuaries. See individual preserves for identification of specific water bodies.**
- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans. **No**
- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of the fill material. **Does Not Apply**

4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. **No**

5) Does the proposal lie within a 100 year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan. **Several natural area preserves are situated partially or wholly within floodplains. However, no activities will occur as part of this non-project proposal within floodplains.**

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge. **No**

b. **Ground:**

1) Will groundwater be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. **No**

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals . . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve. **Does Not Apply**

c. **Water Runoff (including storm water):**

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe. **Does Not Apply**

2) Could waste material enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe. **No**

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

4. **Plants**

a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site: **The existing natural area preserves include most of the common plant species found throughout Washington state.**

☒ deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

☒ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

☒ shrubs

☒ grass

☒ pasture

☐ crop or grain

☒ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bulrush, skunk cabbage, other

☒ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

☒ other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered? **Does Not Apply**

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site. **Natural area preserves are created following their identification based on statewide conservation needs in the State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan, and each site may offer protection of rare or threatened species or represent a high quality example of common or rare ecosystem type.**

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any: **This non-project proposal does not include specific management actions, but it does implement a change in state statutes that allows for more explicit protection of sensitive features within natural area preserves.**

5. Animals

- a. Circle any birds and animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site: **The existing natural area preserves include most of the common animal species found throughout Washington state.**

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site. **Natural area preserves are created following their identification based on statewide conservation needs in the State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan, and each site may offer protection of rare or threatened species or represent a high quality example of common or rare ecosystem type.**
- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain. **Many natural area preserves do serve as important migration sites.**
- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any: **Does Not Apply**

6. Energy and Natural Resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electrical, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc. **None**
- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe. **No**
- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

7. Environmental Health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe. **No**
- 1) Describe any emergency services that might be required. **Does Not Apply**
- 2) Propose measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any: **Does Not Apply**

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)? **Does Not Apply**
- 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site. **Does Not Apply**
- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

8. Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? **The natural area preserves covered by this non-project proposal are designated conservation areas, and uses on adjacent sites are varied.**

- b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe. **Does Not Apply**
- c. Describe any structures on the site. **Does Not Apply**
- d. Will any structures be demolished? if so, what? **No**
- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site? **Generally, natural area preserves are classified as conservation or open space lands.**
- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site? **Does Not Apply**
- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site? **Does Not Apply**
- h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify. **Natural area preserves are considered environmentally sensitive areas.**
- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project? **Does Not Apply**
- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace? **Does Not Apply**
- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**
- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any: **Does Not Apply**

9. Housing

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle or low-income housing. **None**
- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. **None**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed? **Does Not Apply**
- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed? **Does Not Apply**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

11. Light and Glare

- a. What kind of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur? **None**
- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views? **Does Not Apply**
- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal? **None**
- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

12. Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreation opportunities are in the immediate vicinity? **Natural area preserves are within landscapes that have a variety of uses and varying levels of public access.**
- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe. **No**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreational opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any: **Does Not Apply**

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe. **Many natural area preserves contain (and help protect) cultural and/or historic resources.**
- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe. **Natural heritage reports, resource inventories, and management plans for individual sites may contain information about cultural and/or historic features, and some natural heritage information is protected under state law to help preserve cultural resources.**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any: **Management plans for individual sites contain measures to preserve cultural and/or historic features.**

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans if any. **This non-project proposal does not impact transportation systems.**
- b. Is the site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop? **Does Not Apply**
- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate? **None**
- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private). **No**
- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe. **No**
- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur. **Does Not Apply**
- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any: **Does Not Apply**

15. Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe. **No**
- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any. **Does Not Apply**

16. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other. **Does Not Apply**

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed. **Does Not Apply**

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: 

Print Name: Curt Pavola

Title: Natural Areas Program Manager

Date: February 15, 2005

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

(Do not use this sheet for project action)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise? **This non-project proposal is a policy revision that implements legislative intent in Chapter 79.70 of the Revised Code of Washington, as amended during the 2002 Legislative Session. While the revised language allows for a low level of public access outside of sensitive areas within natural area preserves, all such uses (such as walking on developed trails or outside of sensitive areas) would be pre-approved by the department through a site-specific planning or analysis process. The uses would be non-degrading to the environment and in keeping with the conservation needs of the site. No appreciable detrimental impact is anticipated due to the revised policy.**

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are: **Pre-approval of proposed low-impact uses outside of sensitive areas will allow the department to analyze proposals, monitor for impacts, and adaptively manage and mitigate impacts.**

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish or marine life? **See answer in #1, above.**

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are: **Pre-approval of proposed low-impact uses outside of sensitive areas will allow the department to analyze proposals, monitor for impacts, and adaptively manage and mitigate impacts.**

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources? **See answer in #1, above.**

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are: **Pre-approval of proposed low-impact uses outside of sensitive areas will allow the department to analyze proposals, monitor for impacts, and adaptively manage and mitigate impacts.**

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designed (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection: such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands? **The statutory changes referenced in #1, above, clarified the authority of the Department of Natural Resources to limit access to sensitive features and sensitive areas within natural area preserves. The provision for low-impact uses in buffer areas will likely lead to additional sanctioned uses at some sites (where non-sensitive buffer areas allow).**

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are: **Pre-approval of proposed low-impact uses outside of sensitive areas will allow the department to analyze proposals, monitor for impacts, and adaptively manage and mitigate impacts.**

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans? **The draft policy, in reflecting legislative changes to authorizing statutes, could allow additional uses in certain areas of certain natural area**

preserves, including some with existing management plans.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are: The analysis and pre-approval required by the draft policy (see #4 above) would prohibit or mitigate any use that causes damage to the conservation values of natural area preserves, both within and outside designated sensitive areas.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities? **Not applicable.**

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. **Not applicable. This draft revised policy implements a conservation statute. In addition, the Natural Areas Program conducts environmental review and obtains permits for eligible projects at natural area preserves.**

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